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MEMORANDUM

TO: Superintendents, Charter Holders, Principals, and Testing Coordinators

FROM: Dr. Carrie L. Giovannone,
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DATE: April 19, 2012

SUBJECT: **IMPORTANT. Changes to the A-F Accountability System for 2012 and Recent Legislation Impacting School Accountability. (REF: RE12003-E)**

This memo is to inform you about important changes to the state's A-F Letter Grade Accountability System approved by the State Board of Education in March, 2012, and the legislation relating to school accountability and school improvement.

Recent Legislation Impacting AZ LEARNS Achievement Profiles & School Improvement:

Senate Bill 1458 (Laws 2012, Ch. 67), which was signed by Governor Brewer on March 21, 2012, impacts school accountability in two ways: First, the law replaces the AZ LEARNS-Legacy Achievement Profiles with A-F Letter Grades. This means that the ADE will no longer calculate AZ LEARNS Achievement Profiles for schools/LEAs; entities will only be held accountable to A-F Letter Grades beginning in 2012.

Second, beginning with the labels issued for the 2011-2012 school year, schools/LEAs will be assigned a letter grade of 'F' if the entity is assigned a letter grade of 'D' for the first time in July 2012 and was required to participate in the mandatory school improvement process pursuant to A.R.S §15-241 in 2010 and 2011. The figure illustrates what will determine a letter grade of 'F' beginning in July 2012.



School Year	AZ LEARNS – Legacy Profile	A-F Letter Grade	After ADE Review*
2010	<i>Underperforming</i>	N/A	
2011	<i>Underperforming</i>	School received a grade but was not held accountable to it for school improvement purposes	
2012	N/A	D (Initial calculation but subject to review)	F
<p><i>* Pursuant to A.R.S. 15-241, a review by School Improvement will determine whether an entity's final letter grade will remain an 'F'</i></p> <p>Note: Beginning in 2012, entities receiving a 'D' in the third consecutive year of school improvement may be designated an 'F'.</p>			

Changes to the A-F Accountability System Approved by the State Board of Education in March 2012

Additional Point in the Growth Component of the A-F model: Currently, the model is set up so that a school and LEA can earn up to 100 points in the growth portion and an additional 100 points on the composite portion of the model. In reality, the maximum number of points a school/LEA may earn on the *growth* portion is only 99 because growth points are derived from percentiles that range from 1-99, thus making the total points possible 199 rather than 200. In order to equate the two sides of the model, all schools will receive one additional point allowing for the growth points to reach a total possible of 100 points.

New Parameters to Calculate ELL Reclassification Rates: State statute requires that the “results of English-language learners tests” be included as part of the A-F school evaluation (A.R.S §15-241). The current A-F calculation provides schools/LEAs with an opportunity to earn 3 additional points in the composite portion of the model if the percentage of FAY English-language learner (ELL) students reclassified as proficient is greater than or equal to 30 percent in the current year across all grades served. *Please note that the 30% reclassification rate threshold will still apply under approved changes.*

Beginning in 2012, the new criteria is as follows:

ELL Criteria for 3 Additional Points	
1.	Schools with groups of 10 or more ELL students school-wide will be included in the calculation
2.	Must test at least 95% of ELL students (SEI, ILLP, Bilingual, ELL students withdrawn by parent) on AZELLA during end-of-year testing
3.	Only Full Academic Year (FAY) ELL students will be included in the reclassification rate calculation

In order to be evaluated for reclassification points, at least 95% of a school's ELL students must be tested on the AZELLA during end-of-year testing. Schools are required to assess the English language proficiency of all pupils (*A.R.S §15-756.05 (A)*).

Inclusion of AIMS A Results: Students demonstrating proficiency (*Meets* or *Exceeds*) on the AIMS A assessment will be included in the school-wide calculation of the A-F Letter Grade. The percentage of students passing in the current academic year will be included in the Composite portion of the model. To stay consistent with federal guidelines, a 1% on the number of AIMS A scores counted toward proficiency cap will be applied to LEAs.

95% Tested Criteria for A-F Models: Beginning in 2012, a 95% tested measure will be applied to all schools evaluated under the A-F accountability system. Previously, schools and LEAs were held accountable under NCLB to testing at least 95% of students as one of a several criteria used to determine whether or not a school/LEA made Adequate Yearly Progress. The U.S. Department of Education's ESEA flexibility removes this criterion if a state's request for flexibility from ESEA is approved. In addition, the Arizona state statute (*A.R.S. §15-755*) requires that the AIMS test be administered to all students.

For all schools/LEAs evaluated, the highest letter grade a school would be eligible to earn would be based on the percentage of students tested on AIMS and AIMS A in the current school year as illustrated below.

Percentage of Students Tested on AIMS and AIMS A	Maximum Letter Grade Allowed	Eligible Points
95% or more	A	200
85-94%	B	139
75-84%	C	119
Less than 75%	D	99